

March 21, 2012 PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

Lynn Price - Testimony in favor of Raised Bill 5541

AAC Services Provided by Dental Professionals and Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners

Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter
Members of the Public Health Committee

Honorable Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on RB5541. My name is Lynn Price. I am a family nurse practitioner, a nursing professor, and the state representative to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. I respectfully ask the committee's support for this bill.

Raised bill 5541 provides increased access to safe and cost-effective oral care. Certified advanced dental hygienist practitioners will provide preventive, diagnostic and interventional services, which for many patients in our state are in short supply. Approximately 13% of Connecticut residents, or some 340,000 individuals across the lifespan, have inadequate access to dental care. As has been seen in nursing and medicine, the innovation of new roles in the health care team works in favor of patients. The Institute of Medicine has consistently urged policy makers to allow health care professionals to practice to the full extent of their education and certification, as removing barriers to practice serves the public interest; the 2011 report on oral health produced by the Institute explicitly recognizes "that the exploration of new workforce models (including both new types of dental professionals as well as expansion of the role of existing professionals) is one part of a complex solution to improving oral health care"(p. 105).

Oral health is a cornerstone of overall good health, and yet access is still an issue in Connecticut. Please support this bill in the interest of helping to solve that problem.

Thank you.

Lynn Price, APRN, FNP-BC